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RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 7478  
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 4841  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 7937  
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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 02/28/06

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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, February 27

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 28, 2006

10:57

Met at Kantei with Science and Technology Minister Matsuda, lawmaker Hiroyuki Abe, member of Council for Science and Technology Policy, and Cabinet Office Vice Minister Erikawa.

15:00

Met with Haruo Shimada, special advisor to the Cabinet Office, and METI Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau chief Ishida. .

16:00

Met at LDP headquarters with Tax Research Commission Chairman

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Yanagisawa, sub-commission chairman Ibuki, followed by Secretary General Takebe.

16:33

Attended LDP Election Strategy Headquarters meeting. Met with Takebe, General Council Chairman Kyuma, Policy Research Council Chairman Nakagawa and Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Hosoda.

17:03

Attended party board meeting.

17:28

Returned to his office.

18:33

Met at Lower House speaker's official residence with Speaker Kono and Vice Speaker Yokomichi, Takebe and Hosoda.

19:55

Returned to his official residence.

4) US Embassy security unit chief denies revision of Futenma relocation plan

TOKYO (Page 2) (Full)  
February 28, 2006

Kevin Maher, the security unit chief of the US Embassy in Japan gave a speech on Feb. 27 in Naha City in which he stressed that there is no current thinking in the US government about revising the basic plan to relocate MCAS Futenma to the coastal portion of Camp Schwab. He said, "It is not desirable to renegotiate a plan that was basically agreed to (by the US and Japan)."

On the other hand, he recognized that there might be technical adjustments needed by Japan and the US even after the final report, stating: "Since it will take time to iron out the details, I think it would be possible that even after the final report is issued, it may take several months before we complete the concrete plan."

Touching on the reversion of bases in the south central portion of the main island, talks on which are at the final stage, Maher said: "If we just carry out individual portions of the interim report, the whole thing falls apart." He stressed the US stance that implementation of the Futenma relocation was the overall premise.

5) Poll prior to Iwakuni plebiscite on USFJ realignment finds 71% opposed to carrier-borne aircraft redeployment; 60% regard base as nuisance

ASAHI (Page 38) (Full)

February 28, 2006

The city of Iwakuni in Yamaguchi Prefecture will hold a referendum of its residents on March 12 to ask them whether they will accept the planned redeployment of US carrier-borne aircraft to Iwakuni base along with the realignment of US forces in Japan. The Asahi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based public opinion survey of Iwakuni citizens on Feb. 25-26 to probe into their attitudes. In the survey, respondents were asked whether they

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would accept the redeployment of carrier-borne fighter jets to the base. In response to this question, 71% answered "no," with 11% saying "yes." As seen from these figures, the greater part of respondents was negative about the redeployment. Asked whether they would go to the scheduled referendum, 67% answered "yes." In addition, 77% noted that the government should respect the outcome of the local referendum.

The Japanese and US governments will release a final report on the US military realignment in late March at the earliest, and Iwakuni is the first among base-hosting municipalities in the nation to carry out a referendum on the realignment. Its results could affect the realignment talks between the two countries. All eyes are therefore on what judgment Iwakuni citizens will hand down.

Among those opposed to the redeployment of carrier-borne aircraft to Iwakuni base, three-fourths picked "because it will increase the possibility of damage, such as noise pollutions and aircraft accidents." Among other reasons for negative answers were "because I have been against the base presence from the beginning," and, "because the government made the decision without listening to local views." In the survey, respondents were also asked whether they feel the base is a nuisance. In response to this question, "yes" answers-broken down to "very much" and "somewhat"-totaled 60%.

The government is implementing pump-priming measures, such as infrastructure construction, in localities hosting US military facilities. In the survey, respondents were asked if they thought Iwakuni base helps the local economy. In response, "very much" accounted for 8%, with "somewhat" at 44%.

In the meantime, the Japanese and US governments agreed last fall on the joint military-civilian use of Iwakuni base. This is reportedly in return for the city's acceptance of carrier-borne jets. In the survey, respondents were asked if they thought a civilian airport would be necessary. In response, negative answers accounted for 51%, with positive answers at 41%.

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted in the city of Iwakuni, Yamaguchi Prefecture, on Feb. 25-26 over the telephone on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD) basis. Respondents were chosen from among all eligible voters in the city on a three-stage random-sampling basis. Valid answers were obtained from 1,020 persons (62%).

6) North Korea, China regarded as hypothetical enemies in Japan-US CPX drill

SANKEI (Top play) (Abridged)  
February 28, 2006

Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and US Forces Japan (USFJ) have been conducting a command post exercise (CPX), codenamed "Keen Edge," on a schedule from Feb. 23 through March 3. In this bilateral joint drill, North Korea and China are regarded as de facto hypothetical enemies, sources revealed yesterday. The Defense Agency and the SDF have both denied the "China threat" in their official views. The CPX drill, however, anticipates bilateral military operations aimed primarily at facilitating missile defense and maritime security operations.

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The ongoing "Keen Edge" exercise is mainly for the purpose of facilitating communications between the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces (GSDF, MSDF, and ASDF) ahead of their integration in late March. In addition, the CPX drill is also intended for smooth liaising with USFJ. SDF and USFJ officers are conducting troop movements on the computer screen, as well as the flow of command orders and information.

According to informed sources, Japan is a "blue nation" in a CPX scenario, with the United States being a "green nation". First, the CPX anticipates that the United States senses moves in a "purple nation" (North Korea) to fuel a ballistic missile. Japan and the United States, alerted by the moves, step up their lookout with US Naval Forces Japan (USNFJ), US Air Force Japan (USAFJ), and MSDF Aegis-equipped destroyers in the Sea of Japan. Tensions are growing high in a "brown nation" as well. The ASDF is then ordered to airlift Japanese nationals from South Korea.

Furthermore, an "orange nation" (China) follows these moves on the Korean Peninsula, deploying its navy's submarines and other vessels teamed up with its air force's reconnaissance planes and other aircrafts. In the CPX drill, Japan and the United States anticipate a case where a seaborne group of foreign civilians, possibly Chinese nationals, makes an illegal landing on an uninhabited islet claimed by both Japan and China, with unidentified vessels coming around. The SDF is training for reporting the incident to the prime minister's office and liaising with the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) and the National Police Agency (NPA).

At the next stage, the MSDF reports the moves of Chinese naval vessels and submarines staged around the disputed islet. This stage anticipates their intrusion into Japanese territorial waters. The MSDF then moves out into maritime security operations, with all its vessels and aircrafts nearby taking counteractions at once.

The GSDF is also ready to swing its Western Army troops in order to cope with the invasion of the islet. The ASDF is also training to order F-15 squadrons based in mainland prefectures to stand by for operations at Naha base and Shimojishima Airport in the city of Miyakojima, Okinawa Prefecture.

7) Japan, US to put off US force realignment talks

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 28, 2006

Japan and the US planned to hold deputy director-level talks on US force realignment in Japan in Tokyo on March 1-2, but they have now decided to postpone the talks, reflecting little progress made in negotiations on the planned transfer of bases in the southern part of Okinawa. The negotiations also cover Japan's share of the cost for relocating Marines to Guam.

8) Government decides not to reopen investigation of charges of "secret deal" on Okinawa reversion

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 28, 2006

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In a press briefing yesterday, Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi indicated that the government would not reopen an investigation to find whether Japan and the US had actually reached a secret deal for Japan to bear the necessary cost for the return of Okinawa to Japan, as has been claimed by Bunroku Yoshino. Yoshino had been in charge of negotiations with the US on the reversion of Okinawa as chief of the Foreign Ministry's American Affairs Bureau. Yachi said: "In response to an inquiry by then Foreign Minister Yohei Kono (in 2000), the former chief replied that there had been no secret pact. What is the point of asking him another question?"

9) Iranian foreign minister to Aso: Halting nuclear program is "inconceivable"

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 28, 2006

Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki, who arrived in Japan yesterday, met with Foreign Minister Taro Aso at the Iikura Guest House the same day. Aso conveyed to Mottaki the international community's strong concern about Iran's resumption of uranium-enrichment activities, calling for an early suspension of the activities. But Mottaki replied: "Halting our nuclear program is inconceivable." The meeting ended without any meeting of minds.

The meeting lasted for 2 hours, though it had been arranged for only an hour. The two ministers spent one hour and 45 minutes discussing Iran's nuclear issue.

Aso called for Iran to swiftly give up its nuclear ambitions and cooperate with inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), saying: "Iran's refusal to give up nuclear activities will only lead to making it difficult to resolve the nuclear dispute. I hope Iran will make a wise, constructive response."

In response, Mottaki said: "The peaceful use of atomic energy is Iran's right. We cannot accept nuclear apartheid." He reiterated Iran's determination to continue nuclear research and development activities within the nation.

The two ministers also referred to an agreement reportedly "reached in principle" between Iran and Russia on establishing a joint uranium enrichment venture for uranium enrichment activities. On this issue, Mottaki just said: "We will continue negotiations."

Iran is the third largest oil supplier to Japan in terms of volume, following Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Given this, imposing sanctions on Iran is undesirable for Japan, although it supports a plan to refer Iran to the United Nations Security Council. Mottaki is scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Toshihiro Nikai today.

10) Foreign Minister Aso cools inflammatory remarks about China, perhaps out of consideration to that country

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
February 28, 2006

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Foreign Minister Taro Aso has recently been very carefully choosing his words when he talks about China. He appears to be making an effort to improve strained ties with that country ever since he was blasted for such his remarks as that it would be desirable for the Emperor to visit Yasukuni Shrine.

Aso joined several senior Foreign Ministry officials on Feb. 26 to view a movie (with Ken Takakura) jointly produced by Japan and China. He praised the film, saying, "Maybe films and arts are taking the lead over politics." Asked on a TV program on Feb. 19 about whether he would visit Yasukuni Shrine if he became prime minister, Aso responded to the question in a cautious manner, saying, "I will put national interests ahead of personal beliefs and interests."

All the more because Aso is known for his provocative remarks, such as China's military strength being a "threat" to Japan, some observers see a big change in his recent words. They think that the reason is because Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Toshihiro Nikai met in Beijing with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao even though Aso himself has been unable to meet his Chinese counterpart since he assumed his post last November.

Some see his change as a performance to play up that he is a politically balanced leader, with an eye on the upcoming Liberal Democratic Party presidential election in September.

11) Prime Minister approves target of doubling inward foreign direct investment by end of 2011 to 5% share of GDP

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 28, 2006

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi yesterday met with Haruo Shimada, special advisor to the Cabinet Office, at the Prime Minister's Residential Office (Kantei) and approved a proposal to set a target for the rise in the outstanding balance of inward foreign direct investment, such as investment in Japanese companies and purchases of such. The target will be a doubling of the current 2006 level to a 5% share of gross domestic product (GDP) by the end of 2011. The government will hold a meeting of the Council on Inward Foreign Direct Investment (CIFDI), chaired by the prime minister, possibly next week and formally adopt the newly proposed target. The decision will be incorporated in the basic policy guidelines on economic and fiscal management and structural reforms for fiscal 2006, to be adopted at a cabinet meeting in June.

The government has judged that it is now able to meet the current target of doubling inward foreign direct investment over five years that started in late 2001. The new target is aimed to double that amount as a share of GDP, which is to increase as the economy grows. The government will begin mapping out specific investment promotion measures, by setting up a taskforce under the CIFDI possibly the middle of next month.

12) Minshuto to punish Nagata for e-mail fiasco; Nagata to make apology at press conference

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)  
February 28, 2006

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The main opposition party Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) decided yesterday to apply party rules to punish House of Representatives member Hisayasu Nagata, who had claimed by citing an e-mail that former Livedoor Co. President Takafumi Horie sent 30 million yen to Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Tsutomu Takebe's son. Minshuto made the decision because it has learned through its investigation into the authenticity of the e-mail Nagata cited in the Diet that it is unlikely the e-mail was sent from Horie.

The expectation is that the party will impose light punishment on Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Noda and other executive members for supervisory responsibility. President Seiji Maehara and Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama will hold separately press

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conferences this evening to offer their apologies. The two leaders will explain the party's decision.

Prior to the other press conferences, Nagata is expected to hold his own one. Nagata had expressed his desire to resign his seat, but he has since told Hatoyama his intention to remain in the Diet. Hatoyama will convey the party's decision to Nagata today, hoping to put an end to the matter. Some Minshuto members, however, are concerned that the party's decision will not convince the public. They are demanding stricter punishment of Noda.

Hatoyama talked yesterday by phone with Nagata, still hospitalized in a Tokyo, and he asked him to let him handle his political fate. Nagata responded, "I understand." Hatoyama then told reporters, "He should sincerely apologize for pursuing a private person, who is the LDP secretary general's son, based on inappropriate information."

Hatoyama yesterday called at the offices of such veteran lawmakers as former party head Naoto Kan and former deputy head Ichiro Ozawa to explain the party's decision.

13) Horie e-mail: "One way of DPJ taking responsibility is for party head to quit"

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Slightly abridged)  
February 28, 2006

Prime Minister Koizumi last evening dined with Lower House Speaker Kono, Vice Speaker Yokomichi and three top Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) at the Lower House Speaker's official residence. According to a participant, the prime minister, referring to the e-mail at issue, touched on a possible situation in which Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ = Minshuto) head Maehara and Diet Policy Committee Chairman Yoshihiko Noda may take responsibility, by saying, "There are ways of the head of the party stepping down or his subordinate quitting instead." Yokomichi, a former DPJ member who has temporarily left the party to serve as Lower House speaker, criticized the prime minister's remark, "Mr. Maehara is young."

14) What made Nagata believe that partially blackened out money remittance e-mail was authentic? Minshuto's explanation vital

ASAHI (Page 3) (Excerpts)  
February 28, 2006

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The major opposition party Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) concluded yesterday that a copy of the e-mail produced at the Diet by its House of Representatives member Hisayasu Nagata was insufficient as evidence. The grounds for Nagata's allegation have thus collapsed. What made Nagata believe that the e-mail was conclusive evidence? Did he carefully examine it beforehand? Public distrust might grow stronger unless all these points are thoroughly explained in Nagata's press conference today and the party's interim report.

Sender and recipient were one and same person

When Nagata produced a copy of the e-mail in question in the Feb. 16 Budget Committee session, its sender and recipient were blackened out with a marker. But Nagata categorically said in a subsequent press conference, "The e-mail was sent by (former Livedoor Co. President Takafumi) Horie and the recipient was a Livedoor employee."

The party eventually obtained a copy of the same e-mail and found that the e-mail addresses of its sender and recipient were the same as that of the person who had provided the information to Nagata. This suggested that a copy of the e-mail Nagata has obtained was not authentic.

Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Yoshihiko Noda revealed to the press last night that the e-mail's sender and recipient had been blackened out when Nagata obtained it from the person in question.

Noda also indicated that when he told Nagata late last week that the e-mail's sender and recipient might be the same person, Nagata was flabbergasted. Noda emphatically said, "Those lines were not blackened out by Mr. Nagata."

Nagata himself told the Feb. 16 press conference, "When I saw the e-mail, part of it was blackened out." Despite that, he insisted that former Livedoor President Horie had sent it. Nagata's basis for making such a judgment will be questioned today.

15) LDP Secretary General Takebe to file suit claiming slander

SANKEI (Page 3) (Excerpts)  
February 28, 2006



The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the New Komeito yesterday held a meeting of the government-ruling coalition council, where the two ruling parties agreed to pursue not only the responsibility of House of Representatives member Hisayasu Nagata of Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), including his resignation as a Diet member, but also the Minshuto leadership's responsibility, including President Seiji Maehara. LDP Secretary General Tsutomu Takebe also declared he would file a suit alleging slander and seek compensation on behalf of himself and his son.

In the council meeting, New Komeito Secretary General Tetsuzo Fuyushiba pointed out: "Minshuto President Maehara stated he was sure about (the suspicions). He has a heavy responsibility for that, aside from that of Mr. Nagata." Referring to Minshuto Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama's allegations that there were

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connections between the investment union used by Livedoor Co. and

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an LDP lawmaker, Fuyushiba indicated an intention to pursue him, saying: "He hasn't presented any grounds for the suspicions."

Following Fuyushiba, Takebe also stated: "Minshuto members, including President Maehara and Secretary General Hatoyama, have repeated the suspicions in public as though they were fact without showing any grounds. Depending on what happens in the press conferences tomorrow, I would deal with them severely."

16) Horie e-mail: Hard-line argument for not accepting lawmaker Nagata's apology rises in LDP

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Excerpts)  
February 28, 2006

In dealing with the e-mail that Lower House member Hisayasu Nagata of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ = Minshuto) brought up during Lower House Budget Committee sessions, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the New Komeito yesterday determined that they would take a harsh response, including pressing ahead with a disciplinary motion, which has already been submitted, unless Nagata quits as lawmaker. Some LDP members have said that it is better not to corner the DPJ. However, alarmed about such a stance being taken as complicity between the ruling and opposition camps, there are growing calls for a firm stance.

LDP Secretary General Takebe during yesterday's consultative meeting between the government and the ruling parties insisted: "This issue cannot be settled with Mr. Nagata making a superficial apology to the public. I had the impression that Mr. Nagata entered the hospital in order to buy time and dodge his responsibility. If he refuses to quit as lawmaker, I would like him to be punished." LDP Upper House Caucus Chairman Aoki noted, "There were news reports noting that the LDP said, 'It is easy to steer the Diet with Maehara in charge. But the case this time is different. We will absolutely not allow the case to vaporize.'" New Komeito Secretary General Fuyushiba echoed Aoki, "This is the fifth submission of a punitive motion against Mr. Nagata. He should be disciplined in a strict manner."

In view of the DPJ's behavior eroding trust in the Diet as a whole, the LDP's Project Team on Dignity and Authority of the Diet yesterday held its first meeting in the Diet. The meeting decided to compile a set of proposals for better Diet discussions and to present a report to the Diet Steering Committee and other related panels.

The prevailing view on this issue in the LDP had been sympathy toward Maehara, and Executive Council Chairman Kyuma noted, "It is not necessary for Mr. Nagata to take such a drastic step as quitting as a lawmaker." The LDP leadership, though, has determined that as Maehara has claimed that "there is massive darkness in the LDP," a failure to confront the DPJ could lead to doubts that the LDP has something to hide.

The Diet Law stipulates four ranks of punishments: (1) admonishment; (2) apology; (3) suspension of attendance at Diet sessions; and (4) expulsion. LDP Acting Secretary General Ichiro Aizawa appearing on a TV program on Feb. 26, saying, "Mr. Nagata deserves a punishment harsher than admonishment."

17) Horie e-mail issue: LDP-posed motion to punish Nagata comes

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into focus; Governing coalition looking into response by Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan)

SANKEI (Page 3) (Excerpts)  
February 28, 1006

Minshuto House of Representatives member Hisayasu Nagata and other lawmakers will today hold a press conference to apologize about the mess over the so-called Horie e-mail issue. Drawing public attention is what will happen to a motion for disciplinary measures the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has introduced in the Lower House. In many cases, such motions are proposed only as a gesture and come to nothing. This time seems different, however. Looking into how Minshuto will respond to the controversial e-mail issue, the ruling coalition intends to call for strict punishment if Nagata fails to show contrition properly.

At a meeting yesterday of the government-ruling coalition council, LDP Secretary General Tsutomu Takebe stressed: "If Mr. Nagata isn't going to resign, we'll then assume a tough stance to punish him." New Komeito Secretary General Tetsuzo Fuyushiba, as well, pointed out: "The motion this time (for disciplinary measures) against Mr. Nagata is the fifth one. We think it is necessary to punish him severely in order to make clear who is responsible."

Both the houses of the Diet are allowed to punish members. Punitive measures consist of four levels in the order of light to heavy: 1) reprimand; 2) apology; 3) suspension for up to 30 days; and 4) expulsion. When a motion for disciplinary measures is proposed, the motion is discussed first in the Steering Committee and then in the Disciplinary Committee. After receiving a report from the Disciplinary Committee, a plenary session makes a final decision whether to take disciplinary measures.

The LDP on Feb. 17 introduced a motion against Nagata. The motion is now being discussed at the Lower House Steering Committee. Once the motion is sent to the Lower House Disciplinary Committee, public attention will be focused on what disciplinary measures will be taken against him. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, however, said at the party executive meetings yesterday: "Expulsion is like a death sentence. We need to give due consideration to public opinion."

Motions for disciplinary measures introduced to date against House of Representatives member Hisayasu Nagata

- 1. Date of submission
- 2. Proponents
- 3. Reasons
- 4. Result

- 1. Oct. 6, 2000
- 2. LDP, New Komeito, and the now defunct Conservative Party
- 3. Interference with the explanation of amendment to the Public Office Election Law at the Upper House plenary session
- 4. Shelved

- 1. April 26, 2002
- 2. LDP, New Komeito, and Conservative Party
- 3. Shouted when a Conservative Party member explained a bill in the Lower House plenary session

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- 4. Shelved

¶1. June 7, 2004

¶2. LDP

¶3. Obstructed the Upper House president's entry into the plenary hall over pension reform-related bills at the Upper House plenary session

¶4. Shelved

¶1. July 8, 2005

¶2. New Komeito

¶3. Slandered New Komeito's election campaigning at the Special Election Committee on Ethics

¶4. Shelved

¶1. Feb. 17, 2006

¶2. LDP (backed by New Komeito)

¶3. Slandered LDP secretary general's son based on e-mail that alleged 30-million-yen transfer of funds

¶4. Undecided

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